

Rejoice, O' Zevulun, in your excursions, and Yissachar in your tent. (33:18)

The definition of a good life is relative. Clearly, there are those who have very few material comforts, yet they never complain. After all, they do not sense a need for anything more than what they have. In contrast, there are those who seem to have everything, but it is never enough. Yissachar and Zevulun characterize a utopian approach to Torah living. Yissachar devotes all of his time to Torah study. His material needs are addressed by his devoted brother, Zevulun, whose day is spent toiling in the world of commerce. Why is this considered utopia? Zevulun understands the need for supporting his brother. Yissachar is prepared to give it all up just to learn. Zevulun does not make Yissachar feel like a *shnorrer*. Indeed, Zevulun feels honored, in fact privileged, to share in some part in Yissachar's learning. When the *ben Torah* is treated royally, and the one who toils in the field of commerce feels privileged, this is utopia!

A student of the *Rosh Yeshivah* of *Beth Medrash Govohah*, **Horav Aharon Kotler, zl**, informed his *rebbe* that he was leaving the *yeshivah* to try his luck in the outside world. Apparently, it was not a cut and dry issue of "no money." It was more than that. The student felt that it was "enough;" it was now time to leave and "do something". When the *Rosh Yeshivah* expressed his disappointment with the student's decision, the young man explained that the *Rosh Yeshivah* need not worry. He would heartily support Torah scholars. Thus, he would share in their *Olam Habba*, portion in the World to Come. He was doing a good thing.

Rav Aharon countered that it was not his *Olam Habba* which concerned him, but rather, his *Olam hazeh*, This World, that worried him. True, he would be rewarded in the World to Come for his efforts on behalf of Torah, but what about a *geshmak*, feeling of satisfaction, in this world? How can one enjoy a life that is devoid of Torah learning?

This was the perspective of the man who spearheaded the development of Torah in America post World War II. He was acutely aware of the sense of satisfaction, the feeling of "having it all," that accompanies toiling in the field of Torah. Zevulun, on the other hand, was exposed to a business world with its often moral and ethical bankruptcy. It would be a constant battle to circumvent and transcend the indecorous "opportunities" which avail themselves. The allure of success and easy money can be quite overwhelming.

S'mach Zevulun b'tzeitsecha, "Rejoice, O' Zevulun, in your excursions." Zevulun, when you leave this world on your final excursion, you can rest assured that you will finally reap your well-earned reward. *Yissachar b'ohalecha*, "Your brother Yissachar has enjoyed his life in *Olam Hazeh*," because his *Olam Hazeh* consists of toiling in Torah.

Dear Readers:

Chasdei Hashem ki lo samnu, ki lo chalu rachamav. “Hashem’s kindness surely has not ended; nor are His mercies exhausted” (*Eichah* 3:22). With this edition of *V’zos HaBrachah*, I have the *z’chus* of completing twenty-two years of writing *Peninim*. It began as an intrepid idea and has grown into a widely-accepted commentary on the Torah. The *siyata d’Shmaya* which I have been granted is overwhelming. The responsibility to continue is equally compelling.

The number 22 has a compelling connotation, being the sum of letters that comprise the Hebrew alphabet and the number of books in *Tanach*. Twenty-two represents completion – a totality – a milestone. I will view this number as a milestone of achievement which spurs continued growth. In Torah nothing comes to an end; we just celebrate milestones. Thus, after the *Siyum*, completion of a *meseches* in *Talmud*, we say *Hadran Alach*, we will return to you. We have finished. Now, we begin once again.

I have made it a point in the previous issues of *V’zos HaBrachah* to thank those who play critical roles in seeing that *Peninim* is produced from concept to reality. This issue is no different. While it might seem redundant, it is something which should be repeated, due to the significant role they play in the success of *Peninim*. I have the privilege of once again thanking: *Mrs. Sharon Weimer* and *Mrs. Tova Scheinerman*, who prepare the manuscript on a weekly basis; *Mrs. Marilyn Berger*, who continues to edit the copy in an effort to make it presentable and readable to the wider spectrum of the Jewish community; My dear friend, *Rabbi Malkiel Hefter*, who sees to it that the final copy is completed, printed, and distributed in a timely and orderly fashion.

Over the years, *Peninim* has developed its own network of distribution. While the constraints of space do not permit me to mention each and every person who sees to it that *Peninim* is distributed in his or her individual community, I will highlight a few. It was *Baruch Berger*? of Brooklyn, New York, who came to me originally, requesting that he be able to distribute *Peninim* in his community. He later became ill, slightly hindering his ability to continue his *Avodas ha’Kodesh*. As his illness progressed, Baruch was compelled to halt his activities, but the *z’chus* is all his. Last year, just before *Rosh Hashanah*, Baruch’s pure *neshamah* returned to its rightful place *b’ginzei meromim*. May the *limud ha’Torah* which he initiated be for him an eternal *z’chus*. *Avi Hershkowitz* of Queens, New York, and *Asher Groundland* of Detroit, Michigan, distribute in their respective communities. *Shema Yisrael* network provides the electronic edition for the worldwide distribution. A number of years ago, *Eliyahu Goldberg* of London, England, began a “World” edition. Through his efforts and that of *Pinchas Brandeis* of Manchester, *Peninim* receives extensive coverage in England, France, Switzerland, South Africa, Hong Kong, South America and Australia. *Rabbi Moshe Peleg*, *Rav* of Shaarei Zedek Medical Center, prints and distributes *Peninim* throughout the English speaking community in *Eretz Yisrael*. Kudos to *Meir Winter* of Monsey, NY, and *Moshe Davidovici* of Antwerp, Belgium, for including *Peninim* in their electronic edition of *Divrei Torah*. May the *mitzvah* of *harbotzas Torah* serve as a *z’chus* for them to be blessed *b’chol mili d’maitav*.

My wife, Neny, has supported me in more ways than I can enumerate. *Peninim* is no different. She avails me the opportunity and peace of mind to write, regardless of the time and place, whether convenient or not; and her weekly “early morning” last word editing of the manuscript prior to its printing is the final word. She has been – and always is – there. To this end, and for so many other favors too numerous to mention, I offer her my heartfelt gratitude. I pray that: we both be blessed with good health; we merit that Torah and *chesed* continue to be the hallmarks of our home; and we continue to derive much *nachas* from all of our children and grandchildren.